We would respectfully direct the attention of our Country Subscribers to the mode we have adopted of signifying to them, when the period of their subscriptions expire, and when they become due—the substitution of a BLUE envelope to their paper instead of one of the ordinary nature.

THE BUILDER,

NO. XXI.

SATURDAY, JULY 1, 1843.

When we consider that there are some five hundred thousand working builders in this United Empire, and consider, also, the important influence these five hundred thousand have upon the working of events, and how, again, the events and changes in our commercial and civil polity act upon and influence the weal and woe of the five hundred thousand and their families, we never can lose sight of the fact, and never have lost sight of it, that if we are to have life at all, and if there be anything for which this paper may find it worth while to live, it must be through, dependent on, and working for, this mass of industry—this great republic of freemen. To carry knowledge and instruction to them, to collect for them, to consider and to act for and with them is our duty, or we have none at all. It is true and sound policy, whether of governments, petty governors, public functionaries, or public journalists, these are born of or grow out of the interests they are designed to protect or to advocate. Our height of duty, if fulfilled, is the converse of our own personal humbleness. We may be great in the sense of our public, as we are little in the sense of our private position. We have a great mission to fulfil, but we are very humble missionaries; nevertheless, in all communications which pass between us and the accredited agents of any section of the great body whom we aspire to represent, we must beg to have a little dignity of speech and manner prevailing, and this brings us to dealing with the letter, signed C. Mayne, which appeared in THE BUILDER of last week.

That letter, be it remarked, came to hand just as we were going to press, and was inserted in a hurry, and almost without examination; not that we should have presumed to alter it, or to have withheld it, but if more time had been, it would have been accompanied by some remarks.

And these remarks would principally have applied to that tone of querulousness which Mr. Mayne has indulged in. Are we to be for ever misunderstood and misinterpreted? No, no. It is not we that have any cause of complaint; we cannot (if we would submit to it) be long at cross purposes, even with an enemy, but with friends it must not be for a day, for an hour; friends will see that we mean no guile, that we act none; and wherefore should we be questioned in the character of a culprit, or those who insist upon the amenities and suavities of dealing, who complain, and complain justly, of the high and insolent tone of their supervisors ever and anon, why should they assume that impatient and brow-beating demeanour which but befits the tyrant in power and the slave in servitude? Our intention must be apparent to every well-intentioned man, unless he be blinded by the accident of position, or look at us through a coloured glass, when we can well afford to be scrutinized with the pellucid. We have already bestowed our best pains in vindicating our friends, and many of our class, from themselves—from their own attacks, and we must do so, even by Mr. Mayne and those he represents; we tell him and them, that their cause is not properly handled by this pouncing upon their friends, this punctilious and pragmatical seizure of a word, this trussing and dressing; and for their own sakes, for the sake of their class, for our own, and the whole cause we advocate, we are not here to submit to it.

We bid for no man's favour, nor for that of any set of men; and if we had been disposed, we frankly own, in the face of the world, that our first choice would be the workmen. We know their virtues, and we are not to be turned aside by the "sour-grape" disappointment of one set, or the contemptuous hauteur of another, who, standing above the workmen, or affecting to stand above them, talk of them as ingrate, lawless, turbulent, and the like. As we said to a lady, or a would-be lady, one day, declaiming against servants, and, in the hackneyed phrase of the times, deploring "that there were no good servants nowadays"—"Madam, we fear the good mistresses are as fast disappearing." So we say to these croakers, and impugners of the virtues of the working men, "Give us good masters;" but still we are not to shut our eyes to the fallings of the workmen—we will not mince the word—their vices. And who, pray, are their best friends? those who slaver them over with the hollow compliments of a knavish yea to their yea, and nay to their nay, or those who discriminate between their fancied and real grievances, and so advise them in the latter case, that they be not led to jump out of the frying pan into the fire?

Mr. Mayne demands of us to "come forward 'with the principles of justice' and 'the convictions of reason,' that" he and his friends "may judge this blind 'justice' and ascertain if the convictions are"—theirs or ours.

We will not quarrel with him, however, but we quietly tell him that, in general terms, we define justice to be "to do unto others as we would they should do unto us." When we have a particular occasion for exemplifying our sense of it, we shall not shrink from adopting it. There is a lull now, a painful troubled sleep, hard dreams and groanings of the body politic; no bed of feathers or of eider down, or if such, it might as well be the hard board or floor of stones; the intellect of industry is drowsy now, waiting and perplexed for the coming of events that shall infuse the agitation of a whirlwind, mayhap the burstings and upheavings of a storm. Wages will have their assault out of all this battling of the outer forces, and pleas will not fail to be urged that cunning men are hard forging now; then, may it please God to place us in the right, as we firmly believe our eyes to be thither directed now; then we shall lay fast hold of the "PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE," when they shall serve as a rudder to guide us from the breakers; then, and without bidding for popularity, we shall be found at our post; then will the working man, as well as his master, find us to be animated by the right spirit, if prayers and sighs and earnest aspirations serve to make us deserve a hearing.

In conclusion, we will frankly avow, that as we never looked on the old constitution of trades unions with the abhorrent fancy of many; since we never saw in them half so much of crime as of folly; and that folly, as we observed before, amply partaken in by many of the presumed betters of the working men, so now that they are extinct, we are not going to kick the "dead lion." "PEACE"—we had almost said honour—"be to his manes." Oh! that we could see the "TRADE GUILDS" arise—the day is coming when they will be needed.

NEW METROPOLITAN BUILDING ACT.

At length, it seems, the public attention is becoming fully aroused to the necessity of grappling with this question, and in a manner likely to lead to some salutary modifications of the proposed Bill. We say modifications, for it will be gathered from the tenor of our previous remarks, that we are not inclined to its abandonment, and this is our feeling from settled thought and conviction. A better scheme than all the Acts that Parliament could pass would be, in our opinion, to have a council of the Building trade, who should lay down cautions and injunctions, such as their practical knowledge and experience would suggest, with a law founded upon them, but applying only in extreme cases; but this in the present state of the organization of the building classes we deem to be impracticable. That every thing should be done to obviate the introduction of the cumbrous and oppressive machinery which the new Act threatens, and to guard against over legislation is highly necessary, but it is equally so, that the ambiguity of the old Act should be cleared up; and we do in our conscience believe that a properly-constituted judicial board, composed of professional men, elected by the profession, say two architects and a barrister, would be the most salutary provision that could be embodied in any enactment of this nature. It would prevent that arbitrary and uncertain sort of decision which the present extraordinary tribunal of district surveyors involves us in; but we are not inclined to be dogmatical and captious, even in dealing with objectors. We are glad to see the matter handled with such ability as it has been; and if our paper had done no more than convey to the building and building-property classes the reports and lucubrations of committees and individuals as it has done, it would have justified its putting forth and its existence. The Master Carpenters' Society have performed good service in this work, and the letters of "Brickbat" we consider to be the most valuable commentary—caustic and critical though it be to a fault—that has been or will be written on the subject. We advise all to read these letters, they have on every hand given great satisfaction. We present to-day, in another part of the paper, the last petition that has come to our notice; this was prepared in consequence of resolutions passed at a public meeting on the 23rd of May. We can only say, that we shall be glad to assist in the object of obtaining signatures to the petition, by exposing a sheet on the table at the office of THE BUILDER, and in every other way exerting ourselves to obtain as perfect a Bill as possible.

For the information of those interested like ourselves, and the movers in this petition, we subjoin a notice which is now circulating, to which we beg to call attention.

"BUILDING ACT.

"5, Chancery Lane, June 6th, 1843.

"SIR,—By direction of the Committee appointed to watch the progress of this Bill, we beg to enclose a form of petition prepared in consequence of resolutions passed at a public meeting held on the 23rd May, and to solicit your earnest and active co-operation in obtaining signatures to it. When the sheet is filled with names, we shall be obliged to you to detach it and return it to us, that we may annex it to the original petition.

"As it is understood to be the intention of Government to pass the Bill this session, no time must be lost in bringing under the notice of Parliament the amendments sought to be introduced. For this purpose it is essential that local meetings should be held in each district of the metropolis, and petitions prepared and presented forthwith.

"The Committee will be very glad to receive any suggestions from you on the subject, and any subscription towards defraying the expense of petition-

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